

MOBILE PHONES ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY - YEARS 5 - 12

Preamble

This policy is based on the principles of mutual responsibility and respect of all parties involved in the use of mobile phones, including smartphones. (For the purposes of this policy, where the term mobile phone is used, it also includes smartphones). It requires accountability on the part of the user for his or her actions. It is designed to assist in managing the safe and responsible use of mobile phones by students and involves parents as partners in assisting their children in the proper use of mobile phones. It is underpinned by an overall requirement for students to exercise care and use their mobile phones in a considerate manner and to be aware of situations in which others could be affected by their actions. It makes clear that the privilege to take a mobile phone to school may be withdrawn if a student fails in his or her duty to behave responsibly and in accordance with the school's requirements.

1. Purpose

1.1 The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, and parents take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at schools. This Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

1.2 Mount Annan Christian College has established the following Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students and parents guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.

1.3 Students, their parents, or guardians must read, understand and sign the Policy before students are given permission to bring mobile phones to school.

1.4 The Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities or the like.

2. Rationale

2.1 Personal safety and security. Mount Annan Christian College accepts that parents give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

2.2 Educational benefits. Mount Annan Christian College recognises the potential value of technology in shaping our students' educational experiences and the new avenues it can offer for learning. The College acknowledges that at times, mobile phones may be used as an educational tool, as they can be used as cameras, to collect evidence in subjects such as Visual Arts, Design and Technology, and Science.

3. Responsibility

3.1 It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

3.2 The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or guardians.

3.3 Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school.

4. Acceptable Uses

4.1 *In general, students are only allowed to use their mobile phones outside of school hours. Once students enter the School grounds and until they leave for the day, phones are to be silent and stored in a locker – they cannot be kept on the person. Teachers may, however, give specific permission for students to use their mobile phones for educational purposes. Parents are also reminded that in cases of emergency, the College Administration Office is the only appropriate point of contact. They can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.*

4.2 Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to friends and keeping a note of whom they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text, and picture messages.

5. Unacceptable Uses

5.1 Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the Internet, take photos or use any other application during school hours.

5.2 Whilst on premises, students are not to deliberately access inappropriate websites. If this should happen by accident, the following procedure MUST be followed immediately:

- i. Minimise the site immediately – without communicating to other students.
- ii. Inform the nearest teacher. (The site will then be blocked).

Students must not post photographs, personal information or refer in any way to members of the Mount Annan Christian College community (staff, students and parents) on the Internet without the permission of the school. This includes personal 'blogs', social media and networking sites as well as websites. Students must not refer to the school in any way, nor post images of themselves or others in school uniform on the Internet unless on a school sanctioned website or with the permission of the School.

5.3 Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour.

5.4 It is against the law to use mobile phones to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced. At MACC, mobile phones must not be used to photograph, record or film a student or staff member without their consent. It is forbidden to use mobile phones to capture, distribute or share images that could denigrate or humiliate others.

5.5 Mobile phones are not to be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff, or visitors to the school.

5.6 Mobile phones are not to be used by students to discuss school matters with parents or anyone else during the school day. Situations may include, but are not limited to, complaining about staff decisions, discipline or actions of any kind, interactions and conflicts with other students or feeling sick or ill. Any situation that results in the need for parental contact with the College MUST follow normal College communication protocols, by contacting the Student Administration Office.

5.7 During class time, parents and others should not contact students through their mobile phones. Parents or guardians should contact the Student Administration Office if they wish to communicate with their child.

5.8 Should there be repeated breaches of this policy, the responsible student may face disciplinary actions including, but not limited to, temporary confiscation of their phone. (See Section 8 – Sanctions).

6. Theft or damage

6.1 Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.

6.2 Students who bring a mobile phone to school should leave it locked away in their locker when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who leave mobile phones in their school bag are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.

6.3 Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to the Student Administration Office.

6.4 The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen, or damaged mobile phones.

6.5 The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

6.6 It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g., by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.

6.7 Lost and stolen mobile phones in Australia can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless because they cannot be used.

7. Inappropriate conduct

7.1 Any student/s caught using a mobile phone to cheat in examinations or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Head of Secondary.

7.2 Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language / images while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Head of Secondary.

7.3 Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face appropriate disciplinary action.

[It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the Headmaster is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.]

8. Sanctions

8.1 Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones confiscated and stored securely at Student Services (Administration) and the student's parent informed. Appropriate arrangements would then be made for the parents to collect the mobile phone.

8.2 Repeated infringements may result in further consequences.

8.3 As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or guardian would be notified immediately.

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